THE Reconstructionist

Vol. X. December 29, 1944 Tebet 13, 5705 No. 17

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REALITIES AND VALUES

Dedicated to the advancement of Judaism as a religious civilization, to the upbuilding of Israel's ancient homeland, and to the furtherance of universal freedom, justice and peace.

the Reconstructionist

is published bi-weekly for twenty consecutive issues, starting in October, by the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation, Inc., 15 West 86th Street, New York 24, N. Y. Subscription $2.00 per year; 10c per copy; foreign 25c extra; membership in the Foundation, $5.00 per year, including subscription to *The Reconstructionist*. Reentered as second class matter October 3, 1935, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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"The Reconstructionist" is going to have a birthday soon, the 10th. In January, 1935, the issue, Vo. I, No. 1, appeared.

Ten years ago, a small band of intrepid editors launched a bi-weekly magazine. Today the little magazine has become the organ of a new, vigorous movement in American Jewish life. It has many brothers-in-arms: books, pamphlets, brochures, syllabi, a cantata,—and more to come.

Our readers will certainly want to help us celebrate. There are several ways they can do this, and here they are:

1) Give a generous birthday gift to the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation, which supports the entire publications program.

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> Between now and the publication of the first issue of Vo. XI, we shall be happy to list on this page the names of our Birthday Donors and the amounts (if they consent).

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THE Reconstructionist

Vol. X. December 29, 1944 Tebet 13, 5705 No. 17

EDITORIALS

IS OUR STATE DEPARTMENT IN MORAL RETREAT?

THE State Department has blocked action by the present Senate on the Jewish Commonwealth Resolution. This is a grave disappointment of our hopes not only as Jews but as persons interested in democratic progress and a just peace.

Jews have suffered betrayal so often that they cherish few illusions. Nevertheless, it seemed reasonable enough for American Jewry to entertain the hope that our government was on the point of taking speedy action in urging the fulfilment of the Balfour Declaration in letter and spirit. Both major political parties had endorsed the Jewish Commonwealth idea. Secretary of War Stimson had said that the military grounds for the previous postponement of action no longer obtained. President Roosevelt had declared that the Commonwealth clause in the Democratic Party platform represented "the traditional American policy" with reference to Palestine, a policy "in keeping with the spirit of the four freedoms." He publicly promised the Zionist Organization, in convention assembled, that he would do all in his power "to find appropriate ways and means of effectuating this policy *as soon as possible.*" True, that was before Election Day, but one would have to be cynical indeed to assume that so public and definite a pledge was a mere vote-catching device.

We still will not leap to that conclusion. We withhold final judgment. Despite our bitter disappointment, we are ready to listen to any reasonable explanation which our State Department can offer showing why it deems the present time unpropitious for action on the Resolution in view of "the general international situation." It has been suggested that the acts of terror in Palestine, culminating in the deplorable assassination of Lord Moyne, created the change in the attitude of our State Department. We have dealt, in a past issue, (Volume 10, Number 15), with the injustice involved in saddling the entire Jewish people with responsibility for the desperate act of a small band of fanatics and we need not repeat our arguments here. We cannot readily forgive Churchill for his churlish and unfair threat to our people on the occasion of Lord Moyne's tragic murder. But he had, at least, the excuse of baffflement in trying to administer the iniquitous policy of the White Paper, which his government has not had the courage

and decency to abrogate. But our own government has not even that excuse.

When we view "the general international situation" as the newspapers reveal it, we are full of misgivings. Our hopes for the peace and welfare of mankind, as well as our hopes for the future of the Jewish people, seem in danger of betrayal. When Secretary Stettinius inaugurated his administration of the Department of State by his pronouncement on the Italian situation and, inferentially, on the situation in Greece, we were very much heartened. We saw in it evidence that our governmnt was alive to the dangers of imperialism and was determined to realize the promises of the Atlantic Charter. But, since then, we have noted no improvement in the alarming situation. In country after country occupied by United Nations forces, these forces are employed to suppress popular revolutionary movements directed against fascism and nazism, and to give support to legitimist governments that were in power in the era of appeasement many of whose officials had collaborated with the Axis regime. That has been the story in Italy, in Belgium, in Greece. We are left with the impression that "spheres of influence" have been carved out in Europe, and that the discredited balance-of-power policy, for which the collective security promised in the Dumbarton Oaks Conference was to provide an alternative, is coming back in full force.

That is not what the plain people of America want. When they re-elected Roosevelt to the presidency, it was not in the expectation that Great Britain was to have a free hand in the Mediterranean, Russia in Poland and the Baltic countries, and the United States in other parts of the world. That would be a modified isolationism which would be worse rather than better than the traditional sort, for it would be isolationism in an unholy alliance with imperialism.

If the policy of our State Department does not contemplate such a betrayal of the interests of humanity, how account for the sudden change with reference to Palestine? Nothing on the American scene has changed since the President had declared the policy of the proposed Senate resolution to be the "traditional American policy." The apparent change in policy can be accounted for only as a concession to British imperialism, a recession from "traditional American policy" and a renunciation of the "principle of the four freedoms," at least within the British "sphere of influence."

Of course, our conjectures may be all wrong. We hope they are. The multiplication of conjectures, sometimes of dangerously false conjectures, is, however, an inevitable consequence of gag-rule. And if the Executive branch of our government chooses to silence an expression of Congressional opinion, if it chooses not to take the public into its confidence as to the reasons for its shifts of policy, it must not be shocked, should it lose the confidence of the public. One thing is clear: that the President and the State Department must assume full responsibility for the Senate's refusing to act at the present time. A poll of the members of the Foreign Relations Committee of the Senate shows that fully two-thirds of them favored the Resolution, though many of them, in response to the request of the State Department, voted against present action.

What shall we Jews do about the situation now? We must await the decision of the Zionist Emergency Council, which will have met to discuss the problem before this issue of our magazine reaches our readers. And we must then support the policy adopted, with disciplined zeal. This is no time for defeatism and split counsels. We have just lost a battle; we can still win the war. The Commonwealth solution of the Jewish problem

will win out in the end, because it is the *right* solution. Faith in the triumph of the right is vindicated whenever those who stand for the right keep faith with their cause.

TOWARD A REORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN JEWISH LIFE

THE second session of the American Jewish Conference, held in Pittsburgh, December 3-5, revealed that American Jews are beginning to think seriously about the problem of Jewish life in this country. This is not immediately apparent from a study of the resolutions passed and published. From these resolutions, one gathers that the Conference concerned itself exclusively with the question of European and Palestinian Jewry, and with the very important issue of collaboration with the organized Jewish communities of the world. To be sure, those were the matters for which the Conference was originally created, and for the advancement of which the second session was called.

But a careful reading of one of the decisions discloses a new and vigorous concern on the part of the delegates with the future organization of Jewish life here in the United States. The new Interim Committee was instructed to call another session of the Conference within twelve months and to "appoint a special committee to study and make its report and recommendations to the third session concerning the structure and organization of the Conference." Behind this seemingly innocuous resolution lies a people's revolt against the existing set-up of Jewish life in the United States. The revolt arose from the intellectually and politically maturing men and women of all sections of the country, who are becoming increasingly discontented with the chaos, overlapping, duplication, competition and inefficiency of our national organizations, and the resulting anarchy and confusion in our communal life.

To be sure, the Conference was, technically speaking, not the place for such a revolt to originate in. According to the original agreement, the Conference was to confine itself to a consideration of the problems of post-war Jewry (meaning, of course, European Jewry), of Palestine, and of Jewish representation to the "peace conference" or conferences. But realities are no respecters of technicalities; and for a while it looked as though the flood of accumulated impatience and resentment would overflow the banks of the Conference.

From the general debate, and from the many caucus sessions, the spirit of revolt could be discerned in the effort of large numbers of the delegates to attain two objectives: (1) the achievement of a greater degree of discipline within the Conference itself, and (2) the expansion of the agenda of the Conference to include the "American scene." Both objectives were suggested by the desire to break the strangle-hold which the national organizations now seem to have on the American Jewish communities.

Specifically, the purpose of the first objective was to prevent the various national organizations from pursuing their individual ways regardless of the existence of the Conference. Between the original Conference and its reconvened session, as we have previously pointed out in these columns, the national organizations acted as though no Conference existed. Resolutions were published, delegations were sent to Washington, actions were taken in the same old anarchic manner. The Conference was fast becoming not an integrating body, but another competitive body, coordinate with its "constituents." As a result of the Pittsburgh meeting, these national organizations will now be required to submit to the Conference any contemplated project, if it is relevant to

the business of the Conference. If it is approved, the project will then be undertaken in the name both of the organization which initiates it and of the Conference. This does not mean that the Conference can block any action. It means only that the Conference must be taken along as a partner, if it so desires. The resolution has little practical value; its real significance lies in the fact that it is a first step toward curtailing the hitherto absolute sovereignty of the national organizations.

The purpose of the second objective was to make the attempt to solve the *problem* of American Jewry as a whole the *project* of American Jewry as a whole. Here too, the hitherto uncontrolled activity of national organizations, dealing with matters that affect *all* Jews, was under attack. The delegates sought to bring the American scene within the jurisdiction of the Conference. They were, of course, perfectly well aware of the fact that even if the American scene were added to the agenda, the national organizations — under the present set-up — would still be autonomous and uncontrolled. But they felt that the expansion of the agenda would at least give notice to the national bodies of the ultimate goal in the minds of the delegates. Although the result obtained in this instance amounted to no more than the request from the new Interim Committee for a special committee to study the question, the point was strongly made. If the leaders of the national organizations can read, it would be well for them to look up at the wall; there is a message there for them.

That message reads that American Jewry is just about ready to consider seriously the creation of a truly democratic community organization, based upon the local *kehillah,* and eventually to take the form of a Council of *Kehillot.* The time has come to set up, in each city and town, a constitutional assembly, for the purpose of creating a "more perfect union." The haphazard, accidental and fortuitous organizations which a century of Jewish life has bequeathed to this generation must now give way to a rational, systematic and efficient machinery of self-government. This can be done only from the bottom up, and *not from the top down.* The rudiments of such *kehillot* already exist in the Community Councils and the Welfare Funds, which are of uneven quality and in various stages of development.

The Councils and the Funds are far from being *kehillot;* but they have one fundamental virtue which no other organizations possess, namely, they have come into being as a result of a realistic attempt to deal with the immediate and local problems of philanthropy, social service, education, civic defense—and of a personally felt need for unity in the Jewish community.

We shall have occasion to clarify the idea of the *kehillah* again (as we have had ocasion in the past); but we wish now merely to add that American Jews should not look to the American Jewish Conference for a real solution to the problem of the American scene, for, even if the Conference adds the American scene to its agenda next time, it will be only perpetuating and further complicating the outworn "Articles of Confederation."

CONGREGATIONAL IMPUDENCE

ONE of the most glaring instances of the lamentable status of the rabbinate in American Jewish life was recently supplied by a Jewish congregation in Kingston, New York. We are accustomed to having the religious leadership of the rabbi overlooked by secularist elements in the Jewish community, but not by the very congregation to whom he ministers. Congrega-

tions usually acknowledge their rabbis to be their "spiritual leaders," and, accordingly, defer to them, at least on religious matters. But in this case, a congregation publicly repudiated its rabbinic leadership on a specifically religious issue, thereby betraying an irreverence towards Jewish learning and piety that is truly shocking.

This is what happened, as reported in the metropolitan press. Rabbi Harold Englander, rabbi of Congregation Ahavath Israel, protested to the local Board of Education against the celebration of Christmas by religious exercises in the public schools. This he considered a violation of the American principle of separation of Church and State. In response, the Board of Education appointed a subcommittee to study the rabbi's protest. But before the sub-committee had had an opportunity to meet, the officers and members of the Congregation Ahavath Israel decided to take matters into their own hands. In a letter to the local press, signed by the president of the congregation, Rabbi Englander's action was publicly repudiated. The congregation disclaimed any desire "to interfere with the public school system." Rabbi Englander then resigned in protest.

Now, there may be differences of opinion on how Jews should deal with the problem of the celebration of Christmas in the public schools. But there can be no difference of opinion on the fact that this is a religious issue and therefore one about which the rabbi is entitled, by virtue of his training, his experience and the responsibilities of his position, to speak with authority. The members of the congregation, no doubt, gave no consideration to the religious values involved in the issue, when they repudiated their rabbi before the Board of Education. For them it was obviously merely a problem in "public relations." They were concerned with their own personal business and social relations with their Christian neighbors. It is, apparently, always easy to get a new rabbi, but much harder to get a new customer or a Christian sponsor for one's admission to a socially desirable club. So, when their rabbi asserted his self-respect by resigning, the congregation proceeded wih alacrity to accept his resignation.

But "where there is no *Torah,* there is also no *derekh eretz,*" no sense of propriety. No man, Jew or Christian, who has any spiritual refinement can view the action of the congregation otherwise than as an instance of gross and vulgar irreverence for conscientious religious leadership. We are certain that the members of the congregation did not rise in the esteem of their Christian neighbors by their repudiation of their rabbi.

If we are to put a stop to such shameful exhibitions of congregational impudence, it is time that our national religious organizations take cognizance of such incidents. Congregation Ahavath Israel of Kingston, N. Y., should be admonished by the heads of our seminaries and of our rabbinic associations and congregational unions to reconsider its action, apologize to its rabbi and reinstate him in his position. Unless and until the congregation takes such action, no candidate should be recommended by any of these bodies to the position vacated by Rabbi Englander. Such action would vindicate the honor of the Torah, which is insulted whenever its exponents are treated contemptuously by their congregations.

REALITIES AND VALUES

The Synagogue Council of America is inhibited by its constitution from playing a very constructive role in solving the inner spiritual problems of American Jewry, since the unanimous consent of all the organizations represented in it—Orthodox, Conservative and

Reform—is required for action on important issues. But one function the Synagogue Council performs very creditably. It is a good spokesman for religious Jewry vis-a-vis the Gentile world. Its pronouncements on general issues and its attitude to public problems are usually representative of the best in the Jewish religious traditon. We applaud its recent decision to seek a rapprochement with labor by convening a general conference of labor and synagogue leaders, including representative Jewish spokesmen for the CIO and the AFL. We also heartily endorse its statement calling for the abolition of "all barriers against the full participation of the Negroes in the economic, industrial, educational, artistic and recreational life of our country."

▼

WHEN IS AN ATHEIST NOT AN atheist? When he is an anti-Zionist. That, at least, is the answer which the American Council for Judaism would give to the conundrum. The Committee on Unity for Palestine has recently made public an exchange of letters between a certain Miss Martha Silverman and the Council. Miss Silverman had read the Council's Digest of Principles and found herself in agreement with almost all of it. She only disagreed with the first principle "that the basis of unity among Jews is Religion." She considers "all religions outdated, as they have done nothing to make for progress but have kept people in ignorance." She was therefore uncertain whether her membership in the American Council for Judaism would be acceptable, since, according to its conception of Judaism, she was not really a Jew. Did the Council exclude her? It did not. Being an anti-Zionist, she was *kasher,* though she was opposed to religion.

▼

DOES IT MAKE ANY PRACTICAL difference whether Jews believe that they are the Chosen People? Is there any harm in retaining expressions of that doctrine in our prayer book? Before answering these questions, consider this item reported in a release of Religious News Service, dated December 8, 1944:

Approval of the sale of a Jewish synagogue to a Negro Baptist congregation was granted in Common Pleas Court in Cincinnati, Ohio, despite an intervening petition filed by Rabbi Eliezer Silver, president of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis, who pronounced it contrary to Jewish law. The Court ruled: "This court frowns upon the idea whereby any organization can say to a congregation that it may not sell property to a congregation of another religion. This would block progress as we know it." Note that the contention of Rabbi Silver is based on the assumption that Jewish religion is superior and that it is therefore a profanation to permit a building once dedicated to Jewish worship, to be used later for any other religious worship. The judge finds that assumption obnoxious. So do we.

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THERE HAS BEEN MUCH TALK back and forth about the nature of Jewish music. Its existence has been questioned. Generalizations have been made by friends and foes about the quality of Jewish composers. Many of us have listened to the argument in the dark. Beyond Mendelssohn, Meyerbeer and Rubinstein, few of us are acquainted with the names, fewer with the music, of Jewish composers. Ruth Kisch-Arndt, that indefatigable musician among singers, and ardent Jewess, has done a great service in seeking out vocal music by Jewish composers of the last few centuries. She will present a program, on January 3, in Town Hall, in New York, of songs which are little known, which are worth hearing in their own right, but which, in addition, present an illuminating picture of at least one phase of the actual totality of

(Continued on Page 24)

Education for Democratic Group Relations

By WILLIAM I. BOXERMAN

REPORTS from Bridgewater, Mass.,tell of a long-range program for wiping out anti-Semitism, as well as other racial and religious prejudices, through cooperation by teachers and school heads.

Discussing the indoctrination of youth against anti-Semitism, Dr. Margaret Mead, noted anthropologist, told a state conference of educators there that they must inculcate in their children "a sense of acceptance by themselves" which will make it unnecessary for them to disapprove of their neighbors. The concrete outgrowth of this conference is expected to be a complete plan of action, known as "the Massachusetts plan," for combating racial antagonism via the schools.

There are those who will recall that within recent months nation-wide attention also has been centered upon the "Springfield plan," a pioneer effort carried out in the schools of Springfield, Mass. This experiment proved that prejudice could be removed through proper teaching. Now teachers from all parts of the country are flocking to that community in order to "learn how it's being done."

Shortcomings in School Systems

Hearing of these dynamic developments, we are inclined to survey critically the curriculum of the average school system. Aside from a relatively small percentage of more progressive communities, little specific long-range planning has been done throughout the country to teach children in a tangible manner how to be fair-minded and understanding in their attitudes toward other children of varying races, creeds and colors.

Inquiries in most cities reveal no courses in the school curriculum dealing with that most important of all subjects—intercultural education. Nor have we discovered any serious emphasis upon teaching propaganda analysis, whereby the minds of impressionable children might be inoculated against the deadly virus of hatred. (Incidentally, an extensive body of literature is available in this field for use in both lower and upper grades.)

Perhaps these shortcomings in our school system help to explain why some of our children readily fall victims to the first bit of vile propaganda which comes their way and why they in turn become carriers of the disease germ of prejudice.

An excellent case in point is the following incident which occurred in one of the Jacksonville, Florida, schools.

"Made in Germany"

A Jewish child in the sixth grade brought home from the school-room to his parents a copy of scurrilous, almost seditious "made in Germany" doggerel, libeling the Jewish group and casting aspersions against those honored dead who had fallen in battle in World War II. The "poem" makes a mockery of the patriotic participation in civilian defense efforts on the home front. Appealing to latent prejudices, it is calculated, under the guise of "humor," to imbue the Gentile reader with suspicion and distrust of his Jewish neighbor. A snatch from the "poem" will illustrate its pernicious character:

"Oh, we Jews are not afraid to say
We'll stay home and give first aid
Let the Christian saps go fight the Japs
In uniforms we made.
If the Army and the Navy

Ever gaze on Heaven's scene
They will find us Jews there selling uniforms
To United States Marines."

Where had the Jewish child gotten this propaganda? He had apprehended a Christian schoolmate in his own grade circulating it among other children. Without being fully aware of its implications, the Jewish child was sufficiently intelligent and alert to copy it and take it home.

Subsequent inquiry of the Gentile child revealed that an older sister, a student at one of the junior high schools, had given it to him for distribution in his school. She, in turn, could only have received it from an adult who may or may not have been cognizant of its original source—the Nazi short wave radio.

This poison was "beamed" from Germany almost two years ago. Known in propaganda circles as the "Parody on the Marine Hymn," it is written in rhythm similar to the U. S. Marine song "From the Halls of Montezuma to the Shores of Tripoli." Millions of copies have been distributed by Nazi agents everywhere. Recently a witness against a German-American Bund member on trial in Chicago testified that the German spent most of his time mimeographing this material at home, afterwards leaving copies of it in public places.

Typical Attitudes

There are several ways of looking at this type of incident in the public school system. The easiest course to pursue is to wave it away, as did one educator to whose attention it was called. He said, in effect, 'This kind of thing's too bad. But let's not get excited about it. Nobody pays any attention to it anyhow." One might react as did the public school teacher, in whose classroom the child circulated the material. She "solved" the problem by giving the child and one or two others who definitely saw the doggerel, a stiff lecture, then considered the matter closed. Again, one might say what the County Superintendent of Schools once said to the writer on a similar occasion: "The trouble with you Jews is that you're all too sensitive."

Each of these attitudes is, of course, fundamentally wrong and reveals a flagrant misconception of the basic issue. To the first person we might say that, if nobody really paid any attention to propaganda of this sort, the Nazis, who have developed propaganda to a fine art or science, certainly would not be wasting time, energy and money running into hundreds of millions of dollars in fruitless efforts. People unfortunately do pay attention to vicious propaganda. Even if they laugh it off openly as ridiculous, the seed of suspicion is nevertheless sown in their minds. Any serious student of propaganda understands that.

The answer to the second type of reaction is that no one can eradicate an idea from the impressionable mind of a twelve or thirteen year old child by the simple process of giving him a lecture. If anything, his attitude is stiffened and the propaganda assumes greater importance in his eyes. Having been caught in an unpleasant situation, there usually is an intense feeling of resentment toward the Jewish child who got him into trouble. The third type of response described is obviously the educator's method of dismissing an embarrassing subject.

The Challenge to Democracy

The larger basic issue involved in the situation is the planned assault on democracy of which this comparatively minor incident is but one illustration. The Nazis recently boasted openly that, even if they go down in defeat, they already have spread the seeds of hatred to every

country on the face of the globe. This holds true principally in the United States, where their investment in hate has paid dividends.

Even in the German prison camps, where our American boys are confined, they are systematically exposed to anti-Jewish, anti-democratic propaganda. The Nazis, with Machiavellian cunning, act on the sound theory that enough of it will stick, to create divisions in our midst in future times of crisis. Give the Nazis credit for one thing—their thoroughness. They look far beyond the immediate present. According to one of our American commentators, thy are even now readying themselves for a third World War, which certainly will include the propaganda front. It is no accident, that George Sylvester Viereck, (now serving time in a Federal penitentiary), the Kaiser's propagandist in World War I, also acted as a Nazi propaganda agent in this country preparatory to World War II.

If we are going to combat the assaults on the democratic fortress, we cannot afford to ignore the more deeply rooted problem back of minor incidents. We must recognize such occurrences as symptoms of an incipient disease which requires long-time treatment. The manner in which the schools, the bulwark of democracy, are now treating the problem hardly scratches the surface. Nor are the efforts of outside agencies which operate in the schools much more effective. A program of sporadic talks by a trio of ministers on goodwill and brotherhood, such as interfaith organizations usually conduct, is hardly enough.

What Are the Needs?

What is badly needed in each city, town, village and hamlet in America is a carefully thought-out plan similar to the proposed Massachusetts plan, which would embody, as a basic part of the curriculum, educational material teaching democracy in group relations and giving each child an understanding of members of every group. Children must learn to live democracy in their every-day contacts with each other. This, theoretically at least, has been our ideal in education for a long time.

While planned intercultural education at all levels will give each child an understanding of his neighbor, this is not enough. We should also teach children how to detect bad propaganda and discount it immediately. Needless to say, our teachers themselves must first be properly equipped to teach such subject matter. There are, however, ample literature and source materials for teaching in this field.

Make no mistake about one thing: anti-Semitic and anti-democratic propaganda is not going to cease circulating simply because Hitler is defeated. We will have a multitude of native American fascists to deal with, especially in the period of economic stress which is likely to come with the post-war years.

Our hope lies with the youth of America. Hitler has proved that, given a certain type of environment, it is possible to provide young and impressionable minds with an *"Education for Death."* Thereby, he was able to bring into being a generation of youth who are bigots and cutthroats, flouting all the decencies in life.

By the same token, we who have the precious commodity of democracy to offer in a free country, should certainly be able to provide *education for life.* Only in this direction lies the hope of producing a generation of fair-minded human beings who will neither listen to nor circulate the mouthings of the hate-mongers against their neighbors.

For Jewish Cooperative Settlement in America

By A. ELIHU MICHELSON

(Concluded from our last issue)

A New Ghetto

THERE are Jews who will be horrified at the suggestion, seriously propounded, that Jews, even a minority of Jews, create in America a voluntary miniature ghetto. I refuse to be awed by an unpleasant word. There were many aspects of ghetto life to which no man in his right mind would willingly return. There were, however, other facets of life in the Jewish ghetto which were ennobling, satisfying, and intrinsically valuable.

The European ghetto was intolerable because it was imposed by external force, because it made its inhabitants easy targets for mass violence, because it was almost completely cut off from the general economy and culture of Europe, and because—like other medieval social units —it was characterized by filth, poverty and superstition. The ghetto, however, on the positive side, allowed for a normal, indigenous Jewish life. It gave the individual Jew a sense of security and worth. It permitted the self-perpetuation of the Jewish group. Indeed, it was the normal form of Jewish communal organization from the days of the Babylonian exile to the days of Czarist Russia, and it provides one of the best clues to the reputed mystery of Jewish survival. Perhaps we owe whatever vigor Jewish life in America possesses to the fact that, until our generation, the vast majority of Jews in this country lived in districts, large or small, which were, to all intents and purposes, transplanted ghettos.

If ghettoization is the price we must pay for Jewish survival in America, then we had best make up our minds quickly whether we are prepared to survive. To me the price, if necessary, does not appear too high. The alternative—helotage in an America which will not abandon anti-Semitism—seems far more frightful, particularly if it is to be a helotage that is devoid of spiritual content and ungraced with beloved usages.

Why Not Palestine?

Some, to whom the argument advanced thus far may seem valid, may raise the question: "Why America, why not Palestine? Zionists have been saying these things for years. If you honestly believe that American capitalism does not permit of spiritual life, that cultural assimilation and constant exposure to anti-Semitism is the destiny of American Jews, why do you not plan to go to *Eretz Yisrael?*"

To these valid questions, I have many, perhaps too many, answers. There are stateless, homeless, European Jews who need the limited space of Palestine more than I. Palestine is a country of pioneers, with living standards far below those to which I am accustomed. I am prepared for frugality but I fear that I cannot, with good grace, accustom myself to dispensing with the creature comforts which have become indispensable to Americans. Moreover, and this is the crux of the matter, I have roots in America. I doubt whether I would be satisfied to speak for the rest of my years in a language which, love it though I do, is after all a foreign tongue to me. I love this land where my great-grandparents lie buried. I want to live reasonably near the city in which I was born, near to my parents and my uncles and my cousins and my aunts. I want to be part of everything that is America. I am not ready, I never will be ready, to cut myself loose from

these hills and lakes, from this American dream of freedom which, for all its shortcomings, is mine as much as *Shabbat* is mine, as much as *Torah* is mine.

Nor am I ready to write American Jewry off the books of Jewish destiny as part of a doomed *galut*. I agree with Dr. Abba Hillel Silver when he says: "There is much to build on in this our American Jewish community. With good architects and skillful and diligent builders, a truly noble edifice of Jewish communal life can be erected in this good land."

Palestine, I feel, has no monopoly on the future of the Jewish people. Israel can flourish even at a distance from the hills of Zion. Perhaps the truth, the vitality and the inspiration of *Eretz Yisrael* lie as much in its thriving, cooperative settlements as in the waters of the Jordan and the sands of Judea.

Furthermore, even Palestine, even the *kevutzah* does not have exactly what I seek. In addition to collective life, I need a meaningful religious life—traditional Jewish usages and rites which conform to and express a rational, scientific conception of the universe—such as is to be found neither in the typical Palestinian leftist colony nor in the settlements characterized by the spirit of *Poale Mizrachi*.

In any case, Zionists should be the last people to disparage this plan for an American Jewish Cooperative. This is Zionism translated into American terms. Again I cite M. Boraisha:

"One cannot serve national ideals without applying their ultimate meaning to one's own life. Zionism is to establish a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine. . . . Is the American Jew who contributes so much per year to Zionism fully absolved from his duties to lead the life of a Jew, by the mere fact that he helps others to live as Jews? . . . At the most, only select and small groups of American Jewish youth will join the *halutzim* in Palestine. The question then arises whether this greatest Jewish community in history is going to develop its own forms of Jewish existence or not."

That indeed is the question, and Zionists should be the first to support the pattern for Jewish life in America here propounded.

Unlike Dr. Max Arzt, who would be satisfied with the transformation of Palestine "from a museum of religious antiquities and memories into a living laboratory of Jewish spiritual endeavor . . . a kind of religious retreat to which they (Jews of other lands) will resort," Zionists henceforth should seek to put into practice the technique developed by Palestinian Jewry. Specifically, in America they should help in the establishment of Jewish settlements. The organized Zionist agencies have their own chosen tasks, but individual Zionists would do well to lend their support to this effort.

Carl Alpert, writing in "The Jewish Post" (Indianapolis, June 30, 1944) cites approvingly, though condescendingly, the determination of Dr. Ira Eisenstein and his family to spend the summer at the Hechalutz Farm in Cream Ridge, N. J. He calls this "down to earth Zionism," which it perhaps is. Down to earth Judaism, however, calls for all year round settlement in Jewish cooperative colonies. In America, such settlements must not be *haksharah*—preparation—but a long term experiment in Jewish living. Alpert assumes that the experiment is bound to fail—that we are all marked by weakness, lack of stamina, inability to live the cooperative life. He asks whether this is "one of the irrefutable facts of American life." It is not. At least it need not be. There are those among us, who are prepared to live (to live a

lifetime) in a Jewish cooperative settlement—in America.

A Plan for the Few

It will be argued that the plan proposed cannot possibly touch the great majority of American Jews, Undoubtedly that is true. It is also true, however, that there is no need to think in grandiose terms. A valid pattern for Jewish life can be attempted by a limited group. Nor need the group be small.

A realistic approach to the needs of the postwar years indicates that there will be thousands of Jewish men returning from life in the Army, reluctant or unable to fall into their old grooves. These men will be under the necessity of building their lives anew. Even more than most civilians, they will be seeking new values. Many of them will have learned new manual and technical skills. All of them will have become habituated, if not adjusted, to group living. It is not at all beyond the realm of possibility that a new pattern of Jewish living will have a strong appeal for them. Let us consider, in this connection, the following selection from an editorial which appeared in the *Congress Weekly* (June 30, 1944):

"There are observers who predict that the end of the war will bring about a violent spiritual unheaval among the Jews on the European continent who may escape its horrors; some breaking off all their ties with the Jewish people, others segregating themselves into an isolated Jewishness. No such extremes are likely in this country, but letters from Jewish soldiers, experiences of Jewish youth in social and economic adaptation and the lesson of history taught by the war indicate the appearance of a powerful fermenting process in which ideas of assimilation and Jewish awareness will fight for supremacy in the minds of the American Jews. In this sense the decade to come will undoubtedly be the most decisive in the formation of the physiognomy of the American Jewish community and will demand the existence of an organization with a clear-cut conception of Jewishness. . . ."

What type of organization is better calculated to meet this need than a Jewish collective settlement?

Returning soldiers are not the only potential settlers in a Jewish cooperative settlement. There are others who will be interested. Rabbis who are dissatisfied with the realities of their chosen profession; other Jews, loyal to their traditions and eager to find an environment that will enable them to remain Jewish; refugees who have learned the impossibility of assimilation, who want to live as Jews but are without the resources and the strength to uproot themselves, a second time, and emigrate to Palestine—all of these will be interested. Among the four or five million Jews in America, there are thousands who are waiting to be shown the way. To start a settlement requires a handful.

I have faith that the required handful of Jews prepared to embark on this risky venture will be found. If there are few, then we will live collectively in a city and earn our living in the competitive market-place. If there are more, then we will live collectively on a farm, or near a factory, or in an abandoned Army camp. I refuse to bow to the fallacy of numbers. Where few are prepared to lead, others will follow. The power of example is greater than the power of words. There will be visitors, and vacationists, and growing children. Eventually our numbers will increase. All that is needed is a beginning.

Whenever a life-situation demands a new type of social organization, the organization will of a certainty be evolved.

And the present position of American Jewry calls for a social instrument of the kind under discussion. Already many Jews have closely approached the idea. Soon others are bound to hit upon it. It is too obvious, too compelling, to prove indefinitely elusive. I pen these lines in July, 1944 on the shores of Chesapeake Bay. It would not suprise me if the same proposal should appear in print before I can reach any potential reader.*

Is This Escapism?

Normal, well adjusted people very properly look askance at any program that smacks of escapism. Our generation has sacrificed many a precious illusion in order to face reality frankly. We attempt, above all else, to meet problems head-on, not to dodge them. Could it be that the proposal of Jewish separatism is the response of a weary mind to the ubiquitous and eternal problem of Jewry? I think not.

There is nothing inherently escapist in this plan. A new ghetto need not, should not, cut itself off from the main streams of American political and cultural life. In a political sense, the very contrary is true. A sizeable group is a more effective instrument for political action than the smaller family unit. International, national and local politics would not be alien to a Jewish settlement. American social problems would not be foreign to it. Although culturally a semi-ghetto, a Jewish colony, very obviously, could not be completely independent. For the services of governmental agencies and of public utilities, for imported goods, for the products of huge industries, for cultural stimulation, for the facilities of institutions of higher learning—for all these, our projected settlement would necessarily be dependent upon the American locality in which it would be situated or upon the broader American community. It should be evident that, even given an optimum degree of self-sufficiency, such a colony would not be divorced from the world.

Escapism implies the refusal or the inability to reckon with objective reality. This charge we have seen need not be true of a Jewish separatist movement in any sense. Perhaps, ultimately, the real escapists among us are those who cling to the illusion that Jewish life can survive in America without separatism, that order and meaning can emerge automatically out of the present confusion and chaos in our communal over-organization, that anti-Semitism will soon disappear from the American scene or else continue in its present, relatively innocuous, shape.

Other real escapists among us are the wealthy assimilationists and the leftist apostles of universal progress, who still cling to the hope of a transformed society in our time. Unlike M. Boraisha, they have not yet realized that — "many of the ideologies and theories which seemed to justify the indifference to things Jewish on the part of the immigrant revolutionaries proved to be a delusion. There is no 'humanity' that does not consist of individual peoples. There is no 'progress' when one's own people is constantly discriminated against and victimized. One does not travel to 'universal brotherhood' over the millions of bodies of his murdered brethren. One either finds room for himself and his own people in the schemes which the high sounding words promote or the whole scheme is a lie."

That the idea of Jewish co-

*After this paper was processed for publication, a similar program was advocated by Rabbi H. Raphael Gold in an article called *Jewish Spirituality and Productivity* (June-July issue of Jewish Horizon, published by Hapoel Hamizrachi).

operative settlements has room among the high-sounding values which are Americanism at its best we dare not doubt. That Jews as individuals and Judaism as a secondary culture can grow and prosper in this country, as things now stand, is a visionary hope belied by all the facts of the contemporary scene. To recognize these facts is plain realism—not escapism.

Other Minority Groups

Far from being out of touch with reality, functioning Jewish separatist colonies may prove to be a valuable contribution to the wider problem of minority groups in America. Unwelcome, though the comparison may be to many Jews, our problem is not essentially different from that of the American Negroes. Like them, we are an unassimilable group. Like them, we, too, are marginal workers—the last to be hired, the first to be fired. Could it be that the solution of the Negro problem in America lies in the direction here indicated?

Sophisticated people very properly look askance at religious demagogues such as Father Divine. I confess that I know very little about the present status of his movement. There are indications, however, that Father Divine's "heavens" closely resemble cooperative industrial settlements, organized on the principle of separatism. Avoiding the revivalist nature of his movement, would we not do well to consider the implications of such a development for our adjustment to the American scene and for the adjustment of other minority groups—Negro, Mexican, American Indian, Japanese? The search for salvation, or self-fulfillment, is sufficient motive for any social experiment, but the knowledge that the success of a way of life may show others the road to salvation will serve to lend zest to the project.

Are Utopias Foredoomed?

Attempts to establish utopian colonies are not new to the American scene. On the contrary, it is a good old American tradition. The history of this country in the 19th century is replete with tales of numerous religious settlements which failed. A study of these failures should prove highly enlightening. One can hazard the guess that basically the lack of success was the result of two primary factors—1) the impact of America's expanding economy, with its attendant opportunities for individual economic advancement, and 2) the other-worldly pietism of the utopias, which was at such sharp variance with the prevailing spirit of secular modernity in the outside world.

We need not be disheartened by earlier failures. The mistakes that were made then, we today can avoid. Jewish need for a haven of refuge in the twentieth century is far greater than the need that moved the Christian religionists of the last century. Moreover, further study may indicate that their attempts were not completely fruitless. The success of the Community Silver enterprise and the settlement of Utah by the Mormons, to take but two dissimilar examples, may indicate that there was nothing intrinsically preposterous about those early efforts. Even the pathetic attempt of Major Mordecai Manuel Noah a century ago to establish a Jewish settlement at "Ararat" (near Buffalo, N. Y.) may serve us as precedent. The basic need which led that remarkable man to his scheme is still with us. Noah wrote in 1844, with regard to university-trained Jews:

"The consequences are that our sons, having finished their education, return to the bosom of their families, well instructed, it is true, but retaining only the name of Jews, unacquainted with the principles of their religion, perfectly indifferent to its obligations, and probably

with prejudice against it, the result of other and early impressions—forgetting in a short time that they were born of Jewish parents, and marrying into other denominations and communities."

The small trickle of wayward Jews concerning whom Major Noah wrote has by now become a powerful undercurrent. His project was still-born because the time was not yet ripe and because he acted as an individual. Who is to say that, today, a well-sponsored movement, the outgrowth of needs far more pressing, would be similarly unsuccessful? It succeeded in Palestine and it can succeed here. The love of the *Halutz* for the soil of *Eretz Yisrael,* into which he was transplanted, is no greater than the love of many of our youths for the soil of their native America. Nor is the Palestinian pioneer's need for physical and spiritual regeneration any more profound than the needs many of us feel—if one may judge by the volume of material which pours from the pen of Jewish publicists, rabbis, and lay leaders. In a sense, it is still true, as Heine wrote a century ago, that: "the Torah is the portable homeland of the Jews."

In Keeping with American Theory

Vis-a-vis the outside world, our project could properly be presented as an experiment in religious living, not unlike the monasteries, convents, retreats, and religious boarding schools which are familiar and acceptable to our non-Jewish neighbors. In all truth, the proposal does have this basic aspect and should, on that account, receive the support of every religionist in American Jewry — from the members of the *Agudath Israel* to the members of the American Council for Judaism.

In practice, America — like most modern states — expects a certain degree of cultural assimilation from every group of her citizens; nevertheless, American democracy permits of considerable religious and cultural diversity. Certainly no true American would question the propriety of a tiny fraction of Jewry takadvantage of this democratic privilege, thus finding its own salvation and helping to raise the spiritual level of the entire Jewish community. We have already seen that the idea of religio-economic colonies is not foreign to the history of our country and that, in the long run, such settlements may help in the solution of the vexatious problems of our national minorities. It is evident, therefore, that the proposal is in no way un-American.

Getting Down to Realities

In the nature of things, it will be necessary for us to be opportunists in the establishment of a Jewish cooperative, to wait until we discover what human material will be available for this adventure in Jewish living. I want to have no preconceived ideas as to the exact shape which the proposed settlement should take. It could be large or small, urban or rural, industrial or agricultural. There will be a time for details and the opinion of experts. There will be a time for considering the relative merits of truck-farming and light industry, of specialization and diversified enterprise. Even a good idea, however, is still a long way from reality. It requires more than articulation. If it is to be real and attractive, we should try to envisage its actual operation. Let us then attempt a thumb-nail sketch of an American Jewish cooperative.

Finances

From its very inception, the settlement should be financially independent. Unlike the Baron de Hirsch Colonies in Argentina and the Jewish settlement in Vineland, N. J., or the J.N.F. Colonies

of Palestine, an American Jewish cooperative should, from the outset, strive to be self-sufficient. The funds necessary for starting the settlement should come from the accumulated savings of the settlers and not from the philanthropic offerings of such wealthy Jews as could be induced to "invest" in a novel scheme. Quite arbitrarily, let us assume that families desiring to join the cooperative will be asked to invest $1,500.00 in cash or goods. Individuals would contribute proportionately. A sufficient number of interested people with such resources would make the initiation of a settlement on a modest scale financially possible. In this connection, the availability of *bona fide* private and collective loans should, of course, be kept in mind.

It is obvious that not everyone who toys with the idea of living in a cooperative is suitable for the collective life. There would have to be restrictions as to age, health, adjustability, psychic stability, economic skills and Jewish attitudes. In other words, it would be necessary to have a committee pass on applications for membership. In addition, from the very beginning, there would have to be provisions for periods of trial membership, for voluntary withdrawals and for possible expulsions. Consideration would have to be given to the desirable degree of collectivization. The problems of accumulated and potential personal resources—savings, bonds, insurance, and bequests, as well as of individual responsibilities—debts, taxes, family obligations and educational needs would require study. An entire set of *Hukim* and *Mishpatim,* rules and regulations, relating to visits, travel, vacations, and emergency needs would have to be evolved.

It would take long months, perhaps years, of planning to initiate a project that would have a reasonable chance to succeed. It might prove desirable to start such a Jewish settlement on a part-time basis, as a summer project, which could be expected to operate throughout the year only after a sufficient accumulation of group experience.

Certainly the experiences of similar projects in America, in Russia, and particularly in Palestine would have to be carefully studied. The counsel of experts would have to be sought and taken into account. However, in spite of delays and inevitable disappointments, the mere process of planning for settlement should prove an immediate source of inspiration to those who will be seriously engaged in considering the project.

Political, Social, Economic Features

Let us try to anticipate at least the general plan of living in such a settlement, realizing all the while that the suggestions are tentative and in a sense not relative to the basic merit of the proposal.

1) A maximum of direct democratic self-government should prevail. Responsibility would be delegated to elected leaders who would exercise a degree of authority comparable to that entrusted to managers in industry. All fundamental questions of policy would be referred to the general membership.

(2) On a social level complete equality would, naturally, prevail. Family living would be the accepted pattern except for such modifications as would free the women from oppressive household drudgery. Food could be prepared occasionally for the entire group. Nurseries would care for young children. Perhaps even children's houses, with sleeping accommodations, would prove desirable. Under such circumstances a high degree of comradeship can reasonably be anticipated.

3) Economically speaking, the group

would operate vis-a-vis the outside world as a unit, a legal corporation. Emphasis should be placed on solvency, on collective self-sufficiency and collective profits. Although frugality should be acceptable to the settlers in the early stages of the project, there is neither from a modern nor from a traditionally Jewish point of view an intrinsic value in asceticism. Eventually small luxuries should be possible. Ease and comfort enjoyed cooperatively would not adversely affect the ethical or spiritual life of the group.

The settlement, after it is firmly established, might well find it profitable to operate such units as a boarding school, a vacation camp, or a summer resort for Jews sympathetic to the project but unable or unwilling to accept membership.

Jewish Living

The entire plan, to my mind, would be pointless unless it allowed for an optimum of Jewishness. Like the religious colonies in Palestine, our American settlement should permit of Sabbath observance, Jewish dietary usages, and regular prayer. Obviously, no modern group should regard religious observance as anything but voluntary. It is nevertheless possible, by careful selection, to organize a settlement the members of which would, of their own accord, elect to live largely in keeping with Jewish tradition. The environment itself can be counted upon to exert a powerful positive influence in this direction. The educational, cultural, and aesthetic resources of the entire group would, it is assumed, be dedicated to increasing the attractiveness of Jewish ceremonial.

Furthermore, without undue pietism, the members of the group should cultivate the traditional Jewish virtues and seek to inculcate these moral values in their children and young people. Once we remove the profit motive that in our present environment militates against a spiritual approach to society, progress along these lines may prove astonishing. We should expect no Utopia, but we can reasonably count on a greater regard for the decencies and a deeper measure of self-fulfillment than now prevail.

It is assumed that the group would have the services of able teachers. Even if it were necessary to draw at first on the educational resources of neighboring public schools for secular training, the opportunities for instructing the very young children in a Jewish environment and for teaching Judaism to older children in afternoon sessions would be far greater than those of most present-day Jewish communities.

A flavor of Hebraism should pervade the settlement to the end that Hebrew might soon become a second language to all the members of the collective. In general, whatever of positive Jewish content the most progressive Jewish camps, schools and centers now offer their children would be made available to all the children of the colony, and everything that is characteristic of the most intensely Jewish home would be offered to all the adult members of the settlement. Full use should be made, in the cultural life of the group, of Jewish graphic art, of vocal, instrumental and recorded Jewish music, and of dance forms as they are developed in the *yishuv* or in other Jewishly creative centers. Eventually the settlement should contribute the products of its own creative spirit to the broader Jewish communiy.

I have included this sketchy outline merely to indicate a general pattern. Details of organization will obviously be dependent upon the experienced needs and the expressed wishes of such Jews as will be prepared to live cooperatively. In the last analysis, however, the details are

relatively unimportant. The general plan is the significant thing. The pattern of living which has been found workable elsewhere could be made to work here in America. All that is necessary is the will. To this project, we may well apply Herzl's dictum: "If you will it, it is no legend!"

Book Notes

A COMPREHENSIVE HISTORY OF MODERN PALESTINE

HARVEST IN THE DESERT, by Maurice Samuel, Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1944, *pp.* 316.

"HARVEST in the Desert" is an appropriate title to a volume on modern Palestine because that is exactly what the Jews have done, transformed a wasteland and desolation into a blooming and blossoming country. That they have accomplished all this not only in the face of natural obstacles, but in the face of cruel and unscrupulous political opposition makes the achievement not only inspiring, but miraculous.

Mr. Samuel confesses that he writes as a "partisan," as must every loyal Jew who loves his people. It is this partisanship which gives the volume a dramatic and stirring quality. And, it is this same partisanship which makes the indictment of the British, morally devastating. Because the volume is both a comprehensive history of modern Palestine and a superb defense of the right of the Jewish people to Eretz Yisrael it is a most welcome addition to the literature on the subject.

The author relates the unique story of Israel returning to its ancestral home by describing the several "*aliyot*" waves of Jewish immigration, beginning with the first Bilu movement, and ending with the fifth and latest wave. The quality of the immigrants, the motives which inspired them, the several setbacks the country suffered, and the quick recoveries are analyzed with sympathy and accuracy. The difference between the earlier yearnings for Zion and political Zionism are made clear. A full chapter is devoted to Theodor Herzl, the father of political Zionism, who, though he died in his forty-fourth year and after working for the movement only seven years, died, as the author so well says, "with his tasks completed."

The physical conquest, magnificent in itself because it was executed without the sword, does not dim the spiritual miracle —the transformation of the personality of the individual *halutz,* the evolution of the "religion of labor," the revival of Hebrew, the quest for social justice and righteousness, the yearning for equality, the struggle to create an economic order on the teachings of the prophets. All this is not ignored. Neither does the author ignore the many unique personalities who have made modern Palestine what it is and who in turn were fashioned by it—such as Pincus Ruttenberg, Brenner, Gordon, Trumpeldor, Eliezer ben Jehudah, Shenkin, and the most generous and best of the *shtadlanim,* Baron Rothschild, without whose constant munificence the first settlers and settlements would never have survived.

As glorious as is the record of Jewish achievement in Palestine so shameful is the record of British opposition and sa-

botage, initiated before the ink was even dry on the Balfour Declaration, which promised the Jews a homeland in Palestine. The process of whittling down the document, of nullifying it and reducing it to a scrap of paper was inaugurated the instant World War I ended. The truth is that the British Colonial Office never accepted the creation of a Jewish Commonwealth and does not do so even now. The "Arabs" provided a convenient excuse for the opposition which grew more bold and flagrant with every year, till in 1939 it was brazen enough to promulgate the White Paper, transforming Palestine into another Arab state, with the Jewish population a perpetual minority and with Jewish immigration prohibited and purchase of land restricted. Such faithlessness is rare even in the realm of international diplomacy.

Few documents have been as universally and as severely condemned as has the 1939 White Paper. The Mandates Commission of the League of Nations, by whose authority Great Britain is in Palestine, branded it a violation of the Mandate. Practically all British statesmen have denounced it and particularly Winston Churchill, who declared, in the course of a Parliamentary debate, that "there is much in this White Paper which is alien to the spirit of the Balfour Declaration, a breach and a repudiation." For special attack the present British Prime Minister singled out the provision "that Jewish immigration into Palestine can be stopped in five years by a decision of the Arab majority." Despite these fine words British policy has been so cruel and harsh under his premiership that even the 75 thousand certificates which the White Paper allowed have not been exhausted, and about 15,000 still remain unused! The fate of European Jewry has thus been subordinated to the imaginary imperial interests of the Empire. Not only the fate of European Jewry, but justice, honor and truth.

Mr. Samuel comes to grips with the so-called Arab question fully and honestly. The Arab "problem" he rightly maintains must be placed alongside the real and painful Jewish problem aggravated by the last decade of Nazism. Whereas the Jews are literally homeless, Arabs have several lands, Syria, Irak, etc. A correct definition of the problem Arab vs. Jew is: "Given a world policy which calls for a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine . . . has the Arab world outside of Palestine a valid counter claim to that territory to the exclusion of the Jewish Commonwealth? As for the Arabs remaining a minority in Palestine, what of it? They most certainly will receive greater justice than the Jews have received anywhere."

The truth is that the Arabs have received infinitely more than justice. They have profited enormously from the presence of the Jews in Palestine, both materially and spiritually. The Peel report, an account of one of the many "investigations" conducted by the British, noted that the increase in Arab prosperity was most marked in those urban areas affected by the Jewish development, and that the Arab birth rate, while stationary in Arab countries, has doubled in less than a generation in Palestine! Even the charge that the Jews have obtained too large a proportion of good land is refuted since "much of the land now carrying orange groves were sand dunes, or swamp land uncultivated when it was purchased." The "Arab" problem exists only for those reactionary forces, Brtish as well as Moslem, which fear a democratic Jewish Commonwealth in the Middle East.

Harvest in the Desert should win additional friends for Jewish Palestine. It is history and apologetics at their best.

THEODORE N. LEWIS

AS THE SERVICEMAN SEES IT

It is our intention to publish, from time to time, letters which were sent by servicemen to their relatives or friends and which reveal the serviceman's reaction to the problems and interests of Jewish life. Readers who have such letters in their possession are requested to send copies of them to us for publication. Please do not send the original as we assume no responsibility for returning the letters. Let us know whether we are authorized to publish the name of the author of the letter and of the person to whom it is addressed.

EDITORS

Fall, 1942

Dear Norm,

. . . As far as the Rosh Hashanah services* were concerned, I worked a full two weeks from 12 to 2 in the morning, and the complete week-ends, but really Norm — it was worth it! I forgot to mention that I spoke to the rabbi and showed him part of my draft for our services, for he knew that we could not all attend services in town, together. I showed him the prayers we were going to use from "Shir Hadash" and this brought up a discussion of Mordecai M. Kaplan. Here is a rabbi,—400 miles away from the city, and conservative in his opinions, (he is about 50 years old), but he had such a profound respect for Dr. Kaplan, that I felt like breaking down! He said Dr. Kaplan had the greatest mind in American Jewry, and is the person contributing most to the preservation of Judaism, and his program and theories are the only hope for a vital Jewish life. So here was I, hundreds of miles from home and hearing praise about a man, whom I have to defend in my own city!

Well, anyway, he was quite enthused over the plans for such a service and wished me lots of luck.

I'd like to say something about the service itself, now.

I tried to retain as much Hebrew as possible, planning a one hour service, (without benefit of sermon, speeches, etc.), using the finest of the "Shir Hadash" prayers and a transliteration of all the Hebrew (about 10 per cent of the fellows read Hebrew). Naturally all the Hebrew had to be translated, for we know each other's feelings about reading words having no meaning! The translations in the *Mahzor* that I brought with me, weren't understandable enough, so I changed the wording, here and there. *Unetanneh Tokef* I wrote out in Hebrew script, besides the transliteration, because of its solemnity. The service was concluded with a prayer that I composed for our service with the accent on our present condition in the war.

The service was planned on our "Kvutzah" idea, (without benefit of a leader), a truly socialized form, with each fellow giving his "all," and not sitting back and letting the rabbi do al lthe work. All directions were printed on the pamphlet page, and the service went ahead, as smooth and decorous as any I've attended, with a bunch of fellows, whose temperaments usually are high-strung and youthfully "loud."

I found a *yeshivah bahur* to recite *Kiddush*, and for this we used pure *grape juice* (wine is not allowed on the campus).

The general reaction—no, the completely unanimous reaction to the service—was really great enough to overcompensate me for my efforts.

One of the older fellows, came over to me after the services, and told me—"This was one of the few great experiences in my life." You can imagine how I felt after hearing something like that. Another told me that the reason he had hated *schul* before, was because he had never understood what was going on! Here, both the English used, and the translated Hebrew were as clear to him as his everyday language. Incidentally we had responsive readings, solo readings and congregational singing and readings, both in Hebrew and English. All Hebrew that was read, was followed by a reading of the translation.

Norm—those "Shir Hadash" prayers, brought to the fellows and myself, a truer meaning of Rosh Hashanah and its implications in our modern day than any other prayers I've ever read. We concluded with the singing of *En Kelohenu* and *Adon Olam*.

And so Rosh Hashonah is over and my spiritual satisfaction is great.

SHEL.
(Sheldon Feinberg)

Overseas—Pacific Theatre
September, 1943

Dear Norm,

Here is the final story on the New Year services to be held on the island, and incidently the whole story from start to finish. . . .

Equipped with a copy of the services, I attended services (Saturday morning) and there encountered 18 fellows (they expect about 800 for the New Year servics). After the service was over, of course, I could see the reason for the lack of men. First of all they really have a legitimate excuse; the fact that it is very hard to get off on Saturday, while Sunday is recognized as church day. But I'm sure

*The service referred to was held in a town near the Signal Corps School, which the author of the letter attended while in the Army Reserve.

the main reason that they haven't a full house goes all the way back to the problem of services in general . . . attractiveness. The service is a traditional one, leaving out little, the Hebrew hurried, ten-minute sermon (thank God!) and little or no meaning for those who never attended services before. After all, that was to be one of the functions of chaplains and the Jewish Welfare Board . . . namely, to attract to religious functions, those many thousands who never attended them before. But in this, my experience has shown that they have failed; for how can fellows be attracted to functions that have little meaning for them. Of course, the problem could have been fairly well solved if a new type of service were developed, with the basis . . . prayers of the "Shir Hadash" type. But not knowing a method of attack, the Board still relies on the hope that parties and word of mouth will bring others into the fold, never concerned with the lives of those men after this is all over.

So . . . to continue. I attended the services, and after went down stairs where the women of the community prepared a really fine spread, for all who were present at the services. Here I met the Army Chaplain who held the pulpit upstairs.

He seemed quite a likable fellow and was quite impressed by the services, as was the Navy Chaplain who was present. So after the repast, I spoke to him, told him the reasons for the creation of the pamphlet, and then asked whether he would give me permission to have the same service for the many fellows in our company and surrounding ones who cannot read Hebrew but would probably find the transliteration and the whole accent of these services more meaningful to them, as did the fellows up in the States.

He enthusiastically agreed, and even went to the extent of speaking to the Field Director of the J.W.B. in our behalf, so that we could have a dinner furnished to us after the services.

At that point, the Navy Chaplain who praised the services so lavishly and wanted a copy for himself, came over, (the Army Chaplain had left), and asked what was going on. The Field Director explained it to him, and then started a little discussion. These are his words:

"My boy, as far as I am concerned, since I am Reform, the service is fine and, if we did not have any Chaplains on the island, it would be a good thing to have services of this type. However, it would not be right for the army authorities to ask, 'How come a service without the presence of a Chaplain when there are several available? Therefore, I'm sure that Chaplain .....* made a mistake when he granted you permission. No doubt it was given in the heat of the moment, without due consideration. So the best thing you can do is to take up the matter with the Chaplain in charge of all Jewish activities on the island." The field Director took note of the discussion and canceled all plans until he would hear from Chaplain .....,* the head Chaplin.

Of course, I tried to explain the value of such a service, though only fifty or so men might benefit. But though I received another pat on the back for my "deep" interest, his suggestion would have to be followed out.

So, keeping on good terms with him, for I felt it would do no good to argue it further and antagonize him, I said that I would speak to Chaplain .....,* and discuss the situation with him.

This I did, the next day. . . . The interview was like this:

"Hello, Corporal, I've been expecting you (the Navy Chaplain had already put in a 'good' word I saw.) Sit down . . . I understand you want to help us out with the High Holiday services. . . . Fine. . . . There are two ways you can do that. . . . One . . . help us with the singing at our big services for the Army-Navy, or else help conduct a service for civilians and army personnel who can't attend our large service. . . . Which would you like to do?"

"Chaplain, I would really like to help, wherever you need it, but I am very interested in the problem of those fellows who would be lost in a traditional service. What is to be done with them? . . ."

"Well," he said, "a good deal of the service we arranged is in English and we feel that it would not be right for some fellows to run a service by themselves. How would it be if many others did the same thing? . . . Develop a new service and ask to be separated from the rest, because they feel that their service is more to their liking?" Then, of course, I had to let out a bit and explain that this would be the only way that our Synagogue could ever hope to reach the majority of the youth of this generation . . . namely experimentation, until a soul-satisfying, "meaningful for our times" service can be developed and can be enjoyed by modern American youth.

Of course, Norm, it was with closed ears that the Chaplain listened to me. I, therefore, agreed to help conduct the civilian service where perhaps I could have some influence anyway, for the separate service was a lost cause. . . .

So, this past Sunday, I went down to the president's house (of the community center). I had brought along a copy of "Shir Hadash," as a last resort, and impressed him with the

*The names of chaplains were intentionally deleated in the copy of the letter sent to us.—Ed.

value of such prayers in our day. He was quite enthused and we are going to use some of the meditations and readings at the service. So at least I have a moral victory, and perhaps some of the communty will be inspired and the New Year service will mean more to them in the future!

. . . And that's the whole story. . . .

May God grant the New Year wings of peace that it may fly in unto this world of horror with the speed of an airplane, but with the sweetness of a dove. . . .

With Blessings of Zion,

SHEL.

(Sgt. Sheldon Feinberg)

REALITIES AND VALUES

(Continued from Page 8)

music by Jews. Our New York readers will have an unusual opportunity to enjoy seldom heard music. We hope that they take advantage of it.

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WITH THE DEATH OF JUDGE Eicher, who presided at the sedition trial (we often wondered how he managed to survive even one week, with those raging, ranting defendants), the long and arduous proceedings have now been judged a "mistrial," and suggestions are being made in some quarters to call the whole thing off. That would be outrageous. These men and women have been clearly indicted for the worst crime it is possible to commit against our nation. Simply because the trial takes a long time, or costs lots of money, is no excuse for letting these people go scot free. Their attitude of contempt for the court, for Jews, for democratic ideals is dangerous. To let the matter rest as a mistrial now would be a distinct victory for the fascists in the United States.

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WE HAVE CALLED ATTENTION on several occasions to our government's request that civilians stay away from certain winter resorts, including Miami Beach, Fla. This request has been broadcast, through the press, the pulpit and personal word. Yet there seems to be no let-up in the exodus to these resorts. Does that mean that Americans are completely unpatriotic, that they blithely ignore government needs? To be sure, they are certainly not cooperating; but would they cooperate any better with regard to sending their sons to battle, paying taxes or restraining their appetites for meat if the government did not make these *matters of compulsion?* It is really too much to expect citizens to deprive themselves on a voluntary basis; they always feel like fools, when they deny themselves only to see others indulge themselves. If the government wants people to stop going to Miami, it should stop issuing tickets except for bona fide travelers, restrict train service, forbid the horse races and close up the gambling joints at that resort.

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THE RABBINICAL ASSEMBLY'S resolution suggesting that the question of post-war military conscription be postponed until after the war is a wise one. Under the present conditions, judgment is warped. It appears to some that we should always have a large standing army; to others the horror of war turns them against the thought of exposing every young American to the experience of it. The truth is that, when the fighting stops, and a new perspective is achieved, many people will change their minds. The whole problem will get a much more sober discussion when we are in the atmosphere of peace.

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